

This issue's job seeker article is:

Networking

"It's not what you know, it's who you know."

This is, to some extent, true when it comes to finding a job. You may have heard about "networking" and the "hidden job market." These jobs aren't usually advertised but are filled by promotion or a referral. Simply put, a firm has a job opening and the recruiter asks if anyone knows someone who would be interested.

Why would firms recruit like this?

Don't we all feel more comfortable and confident when we have a referral? Many firms like to hire people using this same strategy. A personal referral is perceived as a good way to hire good people. It saves time and money to hire based on a recommendation.

This article is the second in a series on finding a job. We thought it would be helpful, in this economic downturn, to people who may have lost their job, or just want to be prepared to find another one, in case. Subsequent articles will deal with job search topics.



What does this mean?

It means that if you are looking for a job, let people know. Work to build relationships by asking advice, asking if they know of people you can contact, and asking if they have heard of any job opportunities. Let them know what experience you have and the type of job you are interested in.

Don't be shy!

Good networking is mutually beneficial because you get a job and the employer gets an employee. Networking isn't begging for a job, it is building relationships and seeking information.

Who?

Start with people you know. Talk to friends, relatives, your hairdresser, people at your gym, parents at your child's soccer game, etc. Tailor your approach to fit the situation. You never know who may know someone who can help you. If someone does offer to help, ask for a contact name. Contact these "referrals." When you meet with referrals, ask them for

referrals. Try "cold calling." You can also contact people you don't know and ask for informational interviews.

Get going!

Make a list of contacts. When you contact a referral, introduce yourself, state your purpose and request a meeting. Prepare a list of questions for the meeting. Ask referrals if they know other people you can contact. Write thank-you notes and keep a log of your contacts. It would be embarrassing to hear from someone and not be able to remember them.

Social Networks

People who have a web presence on social networks such as Facebook, Myspace, or LinkedIn, write blogs, and/or have a web site can use these electronic tools for networking. Letting friends know you are looking for work and referring people to your information might lead to job opportunities. If you decide to use these social networks as a job search resource, make sure that your information is up-to-date and professional, since your potential employer might be looking at it. ❶



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